

McConnell anticipates Moral Majority support

By Keith Lawrence
Messenger-Inquirer

Republican Mitch McConnell said in Owensboro Monday that he expects strong support from the Moral Majority in his U.S. Senate bid because of his stands on abortion, gun control, prayer in the schools and homosexual rights.

Asked about Moral Majority involvement in his campaign, the Jefferson judge-executive said, "We're not making any announcements today, but we'll have substantial support from them."

However, the Rev. Laverne Butler, chairman of the Kentucky Moral Majority, said when contacted later that he hadn't discussed the campaign with either McConnell or his opponent, Democratic incumbent Walter "Dee" Huddleston.

Butler, a Democrat, added, "The Democratic Party is in for some tough sledding this year. There's no way a decent person could support the national Democratic platform."

The proposed Republican platform carves out conservative positions, including those that would outlaw abortion, reaffirm "the right to keep and bear arms" and call for prayer in public schools.

McConnell, speaking at a news conference, said his personal philosophies are in line with both the national Republican platform and groups such as the Moral Majority. He added, "We have the same beliefs" on prayer in the school, abortion, homosexuals and gun control.

McConnell hopes those emotional issues will help him capture tradi-

tional Democratic strongholds in western Kentucky — an area not prone to supporting Louisville politicians or Republicans.

He was well-received at the Fancy Farm picnic in rural Graves County earlier this month, and that was encouraging, he said.

"I think western Kentucky is ripe for the taking," he said. "Reagan only lost the 1st (Congressional) District by 15,000 votes last time and that was with a Southerner leading the Democratic ticket."

This time, he said, "I think Reagan will carry the 1st District. I think that's the sleeper in this race. It's going through an evolutionary period and it's closer to the national Republican Party than the national Democratic Party."

"... I don't say I'll carry the 1st District," McConnell said. "But I expect to carry the 2nd (which includes Daviess and Hancock counties). The 2nd is usually a swing district in presidential election years."

McConnell was in Owensboro to deliver his 12th "Dope on Dee" attack on Huddleston's record in the Senate. This week his theme was campaign financing.

Both men have received funds from political action committees — Huddleston \$534,306 and McConnell \$75,436.

McConnell said he isn't opposed to PAC money, but he called the amount Huddleston has received "obscene."

"What does Huddleston do for this money?" McConnell asked. "Obviously he's for sale to the highest

bidder. He has more strings on him than Pinocchio. He's been bought and sold from Louisiana to Los Angeles."

Asked whether he would refuse a similar amount of PAC money, McConnell said, "I would never be in a position where more than half of my campaign financing came from outside the state."

Huddleston, he said, has raised 53 percent of his money from outside Kentucky. McConnell said his own campaign has raised 80 percent of its funds inside the state.

He said his campaign is not hurting for money. "We're about even with Huddleston now. We've raised more money in Kentucky than he has, and I think that says something about his support in the state."

McConnell also addressed the 41st annual convention of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts at the Executive Inn Rivermont, telling them that "America is at a crossroads in 1984."

He said, "I believe in the entrepreneur who goes out and risks everything to make things happen. I believe in growth that provides work and pulls people out of poverty. Capitalism is basic to the human spirit and to America."

The greatest poverty program ever invented, McConnell said, "is the free enterprise system."

He assured the 400 delegates at the convention that if elected he would be appointed to the Senate Agriculture Committee to replace Huddleston. "You know how much influence Republicans have in Frankfort?"



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McConnell asked, "That's how much Democrats have in the U.S. Senate."

The issue, McConnell said, is whose vision of America voters support. "We both love Kentucky and the nation," he said of himself and Huddleston. "That's not the issue. The issue is whose vision of our future you share."

Huddleston is scheduled to address the conservation group today.

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